UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1994/129
13 April 1994

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fiftieth session
Agenda item 23

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Note verbale dated 11 March 1994 from the Permanent Mission of Japan to the Office of the United Nations and the other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Japan to the Office of the United Nations and the other international organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to request the latter to issue the document attached hereto as a written statement under agenda item 23, "Follow-up to the World Conference on Human Rights" of the fiftieth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

GE.94-12478 (E)

1. The Government of Japan welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Ayala Lasso as High Commissioner for Human Rights. Japan supported the creation of the post of High Commissioner, and intends to continue to work closely with him as he carries out his very important responsibilities.

2. The Government of Japan believes that 1993 will be remembered by future generations as a turning point in the history of human rights. It was at the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna that the proposal to create a high commissioner was first advanced, and that agreement was reached on the idea that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. However, constant vigilance is necessary if further progress is to take place. As the very first paragraph of the Vienna Declaration states, human rights is "the birthright of all human beings" and a matter of concern to the international community. Therefore the task of following up the World Conference is a very important one, and this statement will base its argument on this topic.

3. The Vienna Declaration provides guidance on how to address human rights violations in their various forms. The Commission on Human Rights should make every effort to respect both the letter and spirit of the Declaration, and every item on its agenda could contribute to this end. Accordingly, beginning with its next session, the Commission should no longer have a separate agenda item on the follow-up to the World Conference as all of its activities should be means by which to follow up the Conference.

4. The follow-up process was initiated last year by the General Assembly when it established the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Government of Japan congratulates the High Commissioner for already fulfilling one of his mandates during the fiftieth session of the Commission by undertaking dialogues with Governments, and sincerely hopes such dialogues continue.

5. Although the responsibility of the High Commissioner is to promote and protect the effective enjoyment of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, he should not overreach by attempting to replace all existing mechanisms, but concentrate instead on coordination.

6. In this context, the High Commissioner could have opportunities to consult with Special Rapporteurs, who pursue their mandates without much opportunity to exchange views or information on how this is best done. Such consultation might also contribute to reducing the duplication of work.

7. Coordination of the work of the treaty bodies is another area in which the High Commissioner might make a useful contribution by attending the meetings of chairmen of the various human rights treaty bodies to discuss such matters as simplification of the reporting procedures States must follow after ratifying a human rights treaty. As the responsibility for submission of periodic reports grows with each treaty a State ratifies, the chairmen of the treaty bodies should examine ways of coordinating guidelines, or eliminating redundant requirements.

8. Coordinating the work of those United Nations organs dealing with human rights issues is likewise a matter of importance. It is necessary for each

organ to understand what the others are doing, to exchange views and information, to share experience, and to plan and implement activities in consultation with each other. This is a difficult objective to achieve, but we hope that the High Commissioner will be successful in pursuing it.

9. The founders of the United Nations enshrined three objectives in the Charter: promoting and protecting human rights, building peace, and achieving development. Without human rights, true peace cannot be attained and real development cannot take place. Once a human rights violation occurs, a wound is created that will never heal. It is therefore not only promoting and protecting human rights that is important but preventing violations from taking place. The Government of Japan hopes that the High Commissioner will investigate vigorously all problems brought to his attention, strive to find solutions for them, and at times not hesitate to perform the role of good office. Furthermore it hopes that the High Commissioner will form a partnership with the other organs of the United Nations so that the goals articulated in the Charter of the United Nations may be realized.

10. In conclusion, it is the hope of the Government and people of Japan that, by following up the signal achievements of the Vienna Conference, a world in which human rights are universally respected, and which for the first time in its history knows true and lasting peace, can be created.

- - - - -